In the claims:

1. (currently amended) Apparatus for use in an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising:

logic for collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including a parameter related to the distance between the access point and that one station;

logic for selecting ~~one~~ only a subset of the bid messages based at least in-part on the parameter related to distance; and

logic for sending an accept message to ~~the~~ each station which sent a ~~the~~ selected bid message, the accept message for causing the station to associate with the access point.

2. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the selecting logic calculates an indication of relative data rate increase which would result from gaining association with the access point, and the logic for sending an accept message sends an accept message to the station which will obtain a greatest data rate increase ~~whose bid message included the parameter indicating the closest (change in) distance~~.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the accept message is sent only if a maximum number of station associations has not been exceeded.

4.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising logic for maintaining a table including an entry for each station from which a bid message has been received, each entry including the parameter.

5.   (currently amended) Apparatus for use in an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising:

logic for collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including a parameter related to the distance between the access point and that one station;

logic for maintaining a table including an entry for each station from which a bid message has been received, each entry including the parameter;

logic for selecting ~~one~~ only a subset of the bid messages based at least in-part on the parameter indicating the closest distance; and

logic for sending an accept message to ~~the~~ each station which sent ~~the~~ a selected bid message, the accept message for causing the station to associate with the access point.